

NCRAR Newsletter:

Special Issue March 2011



In November 2010 Dr. Stephen Fausti retired as NCRAR Director. We dedicate this special issue of the NCRAR newsletter to him and the legacy he leaves behind.

Dr. Stephen Fausti's remarkable career has contributed significantly to auditory research, teaching, and the clinical practice of audiology. He received his BA from Washington State University, his MA from the University of California at San Francisco, and his PhD from the University of Washington. From the onset of his career, Dr. Fausti's research aimed at improving quality of life for the nation's Veterans who are afflicted with hearing loss, tinnitus, and/or vestibular dysfunction. Much of his career has focused on developing new strategies, protocols, and equipment to allow early identification of ototoxicity. His research and leadership in the development of practical clinical procedures for the behavioral and objective monitoring of high-frequency hearing loss has laid the groundwork for establishing standards of clinical practice in this area, and has led to the use of high frequency audiometry as a valuable clinical tool.



In his work with Veterans, Dr. Fausti's research also led to the development of custom instrumentation and innovative techniques for obtaining electrophysiological measures of high frequency auditory function. These developments are especially applicable to patients who are unable to respond reliably to behavioral tests, due to age, injury, illness, or some other limitation.

Over the span of his career, Dr. Fausti has also made significant contributions to the evaluation and treatment of tinnitus, including pioneering an automated system for tinnitus assessment. He has investigated the auditory effects of a variety of disease processes, including otosclerosis, diabetes, and multiple sclerosis, and has made important contributions in the areas of tympanometry, automated audiological measurement, assessment of auditory brainstem response and distortion product otoacoustic emission sensitivity to high frequency stimuli.

Dr. Fausti has given over 140 national and international presentations, and authored or co-authored more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals in audiology, infectious disease, otolaryngology, psychology, industrial hygiene, and cancer. His research has far-reaching implications to multiple and diverse medical fields and has earned him the respect and recognition as an international authority on early ototoxic-induced hearing threshold changes and tinnitus assessment.

(Continued on Page 2)

Location information**NCRAR is located at:**

Building 104, level P5, at the
Portland VA Medical Center,
Portland, Oregon

Address:

3710 SW US Veterans
Hospital Road
Portland, OR 97239-2964

Website:

www.ncrar.research.va.gov

Phone Numbers

Portland VAMC:

(503) 220-8262

Fax: (503) 721-1402

Extensions**Interim Director and Deputy Director of Research:**

Dr. Marjorie Leek:
ext. 54692

Founder and Past Director:
Stephen Fausti Ph.D.,
ext. 55306

Special Assistant:

Bonnie Becker, ext. 54525

Deputy Director of Administration:

Patrick Helt M.A., ext. 58260

Deputy Director of Education, Outreach and Dissemination:

Gabrielle Saunders Ph.D.,
ext. 56210

Newsletter editors:

Gabrielle Saunders
Christine Kaelin
Christina Paul

Stephen Fausti (continued from Page 1)

In 2004, Dr. Fausti was the recipient of the Paul B. Magnuson Award for Outstanding Achievement in Rehabilitative Research and Development from the Veterans Administration (VA) in recognition of his "entrepreneurship, humanitarianism, and dedication to Veterans."

In 2010 Dr. Fausti was honored with the Jerger Career Award for Research in Audiology—the first ever VA employee to receive this award. This award honors individuals who have had a distinguished career in the field of audiology. In addition to research, recipients must have made significant contributions to the practice and/or teaching of audiology as well.

In spite of these many prestigious awards, Dr. Fausti would likely say that his proudest achievement was the founding of the VA Rehabilitation Research and Development National Center for Rehabilitative Auditory Research (NCRAR) at the Portland VA Medical Center. Under his leadership, the NCRAR has grown substantially since its inception in 1997. It is now the country's leading research center in rehabilitative audiology. Dr. Fausti has drawn together a remarkable group of investigators and researchers who work together in this center of excellence to help our Veterans cope effectively with auditory impairments.

In addition to his work at the NCRAR, Dr. Fausti is a Professor in the Departments of Otolaryngology and Neurology at Oregon Health & Science University and has taught at various universities throughout the state of Oregon. He has played an active role in developing and participating in programs to mentor student audiologists in the VA health-

care system, and over the years has served on numerous working groups, planning committees, and editorial and review boards.

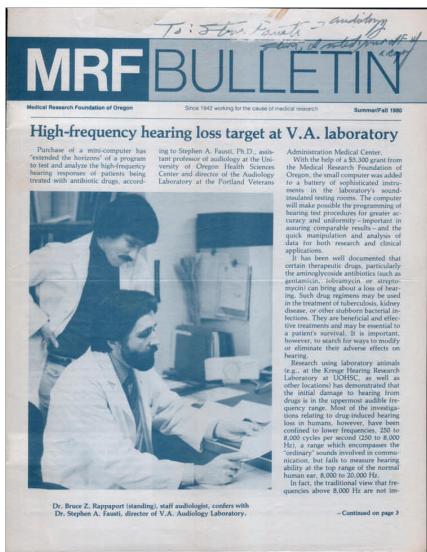
Dr. Fausti's many contributions to the field of audiology have impacted research, teaching, and clinical practice, as well as VA administration and management. He is a versatile and prolific individual whose professional approach has resulted in the highest standards of research and accomplishment.



Stephen Fausti with his family at AudiologyNow, the annual convention of the American Academy of Audiology in San Diego 2010 where he received the Jerger Career Award for Research in Audiology.

From left to right: Daughter Teresa Fausti, daughter-in-law Janel, son John Fausti, Stephen Fausti and wife Gwen Fausti. His daughter Kristina was unable to attend the event.

Stephen Fausti through the ages: In the news



High-frequency hearing loss target at V.A. laboratory

Purchase of a mini-computer has enabled Dr. Stephen A. Fausti, Ph.D., audiologist, to test and analyze the high-frequency hearing responses of patients being treated with antibiotic drugs.

Administrative Medical Center, the VA's Research Foundation of Oregon, the small computer was added to the Medical Research Foundation of Oregon's audiology laboratory at the Portland Veterans Administration Medical Center.

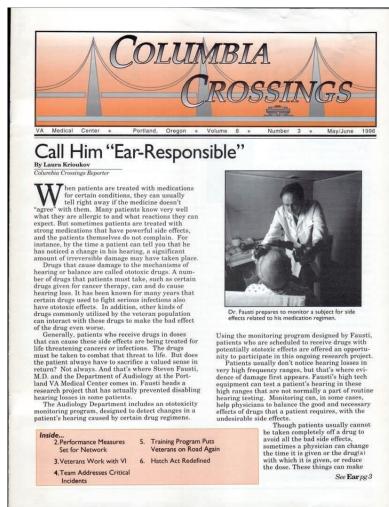
The computer will make possible the programming of hearing tests to obtain greater accuracy and uniformity – important in assessing drug-induced damage and quick manipulation and analysis of data for both research and clinical applications.

It has been well documented that certain antibiotic drugs, particularly the aminoglycoside antibiotics (such as gentamicin, kanamycin, streptomycin) can bring about a loss of hearing. Such drugs are commonly used in the treatment of tuberculosis, kidney disease, and other serious bacterial infections. They are beneficial and effective treatments, but they can also affect a patient's survival. It is important however, to minimize toxicity or eliminate their adverse effects on hearing.

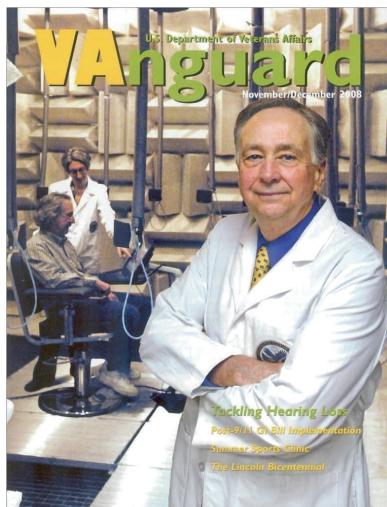
Research using laboratory animals (e.g., at the Kresge Hearing Research Laboratory at the University of Michigan) has demonstrated that the amount of hearing loss from drugs is in the uppermost audible frequencies (above 4,000 Hz). These frequencies relate to drug-induced hearing loss in humans. Human ears have continued to lower frequencies, 250 to 1,000 Hz, and then to higher frequencies, 4,000 to 20,000 Hz. In fact, the traditional view that frequencies above 8,000 Hz are not im-

—Continued on page 3

In 1980, Dr. Fausti received funding from the Medical Research Foundation for new equipment to test high frequency hearing.



Dr. Fausti was featured in 1996 in the Columbia Crossings publication for his innovative ototoxicity monitoring program at the Portland VA Medical Center.



Stephen Fausti was featured on the cover of VAnguard magazine in December 2008. He is standing in the doorway of the NCRAR anechoic chamber.



PVAMC Chief of Staff presenting Dr. Fausti with VA Recognition Award.



Dr. Fausti receiving the Paul B. Magnuson Award in 2004 for Outstanding Achievement in Rehabilitative Research and Development. It was presented by the VA in recognition of his entrepreneurship, humanitarianism, and dedication to Veterans.



Left: Dr. Fausti receiving the Jerger Career Award for Research in Audiology from Dr. Brenda Ryals at AudiologyNow 2010.

Retirement Celebration, November 2010

On November 5th 2010 the NCRAR held a retirement party for Dr. Fausti. In attendance were many distinguished members from the Office VA Research Rehabilitation and Development (RR&D), and from the scientific and local communities. The evening's highlights included presentation of several special commemorative items to Dr. Fausti by Dr. Patricia Dorn and Mr. Ricardo Gonzalez on behalf of VA RR&D. He received letters of recognition from President Obama and Oregon Senator Ron Wyden, recognizing his contribution to improving the quality of life for Veterans, and a framed American Flag which had flown over the White House. Dr. Patricia Dorn also presented him special issues of the Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development comprising Dr. Fausti's many publications over the years in that journal.

Dr. Fausti was also toasted (and sometimes lightly roasted) by colleagues from the NCRAR and around the country—including Drs. Walt MacDonald, Dennis Smith, Robert Ruff, Gabrielle Saunders and Mr. Patrick Helt. Dr. Allen Ryan, although unable to attend the event, sent a specially-recorded video message. Dr. Fausti also received letters from distinguished colleagues who were unable to attend the event. The text of three of these messages is printed below.

Dr. Mindy Aisen, who was Director of VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Department from 1997 to 2005, and is currently Chief Medical Officer at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center sent the following letter:

Dr. Fausti, you were one of the first scientists I met when I assumed the exciting role of Director of Rehabilitation Research and Development in 1997.

Your enthusiasm, dedication to our Veterans and your commitment to the concepts that "a job well done is its own reward" and "everything worthwhile requires hard work" impressed me immediately.

You became one of my most trusted advisors, a key player in developing National Policy for Rehabilitation Research for our Veterans.

You developed the most outstanding Center of Excellence for the most common disabling condition of Veterans: Hearing Loss (and its complex interactions with other abilities/disabling conditions) in the world, for the most deserving population in the world.

I am proud to have worked with you side-by-side for the best seven years of my life. I will never forget your brilliant insights and unfailing loyalty.

I hope this is the beginning of even more important contributions and I stand ready to join you in any cause!

Warmest personal regards, Mindy

Dr. Feussner, Distinguished University Professor and Chairman of the Department of Medicine at the Medical University of South Carolina, and Professor in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology, and the Department of Neurology asked us to read the following note.

Congratulations Steve.

You've done a fabulous job at the national level in VA advising, helping and participating in the growth of national rehabilitation research and an even more amazing job locally first creating, then leading your new center and expanding its research scope and productivity.

You remind me of the Robert Frost quote:

"The world is full of willing people. Some are willing to work and the rest are willing to let them."

Clearly Steve you are in the "always willing to work" category, and you work effectively and successfully!

To those remaining at the NCRAR: You will not be able to replace him but you may identify two or three folks who will be able to keep up with his work productivity! So good luck to all!

The Honorable Margaret Giannini, MD, FAAP was appointed Director of Health and Human Services Office on Disability in 2002. Prior to that she served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aging at the DHHS. Between 1981 and 1992 she was Deputy Assistant Chief Medical Director for Rehabilitation and Prosthetics at the VA. From her he received the following words:

It is my honor and extreme pleasure to salute Steve on this joyous occasion.

I have been privileged and in some ways part of the development of Steve's growth and achievements during his outstanding career. I have always placed him as one of my special protégés even though his many stellar achievements began before we met.

I would not only like to speak of Steve as a clinician, researcher, administrator and educator, but also more importantly: Steve the man. Steve the father, Steve the husband, and Steve the friend.

As a researcher and scientist, he is creative, inquisitive of serious questions that have difficult answers.

He is persistent, inventive, industrious and committed. He has made substantial contributions to

(Continued on Page 7)

Retirement Celebration 2010



Dr. Patricia Dorn and Mr. Ricardo Gonzalez presenting Dr. Fausti with a recognition letter (above) and U.S. flag (left) from President Obama.



Ms. Christine Kaelin and Dr. Gabrielle Saunders presenting Dr. Fausti with an appreciation award from the NCRAR staff.



Dr. Walt MacDonald, NCRAR Advisory Board Member and former Chief of Medicine at Portland VA Medical Center, presenting Dr. Fausti with a pillar from the original Portland VA Medical Center!



Dr. Dennis Smith, former Associate Director of the NCRAR and former Undersecretary for VA R&D Service (left), **Dr. Robert Ruff**, National Director for Neurology, Department of Veterans Affairs, (above) and **Dr. Hunter Peckham**, Director of the Functional Electrical Stimulation Center of Excellence at the Cleveland VA (right) giving tributes to Dr. Fausti.



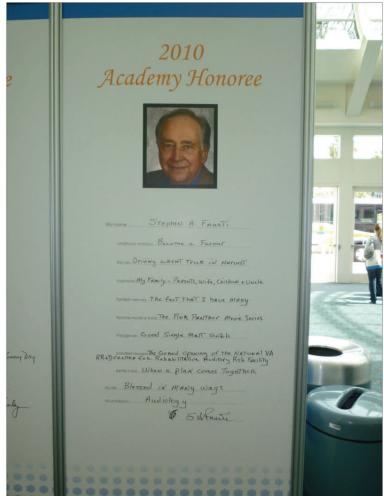
Stephen Fausti through the ages: In Action



Dr. Fausti working in his auditory research laboratory.



Dr. Fausti and others witnessing Gov. Straub signing licensure bill for audiologists in State of Oregon.



Left: Poster at AudiologyNow 2010 convention highlighting Dr. Fausti's achievements.



Audiology never changes?



Dr. Fausti introducing the NCRAR pre-conference workshop in October 2009.



There is no end to paperwork.

NCRAR Staff quotes

Staff at the NCRAR compiled a scrapbook for Dr. Fausti. Below are some quotes from that scrapbook:

"I am often amazed at how certain key people end up influencing me in life.... So thanks for drawing me in and providing me with such wonderful and generous support all along the way"

"I've learned so much from you about grant writing, people management, farming tips and weird (tho' often wise) sayings - and I hope we've learned enough from you to maintain this (NCRAR) precious place."

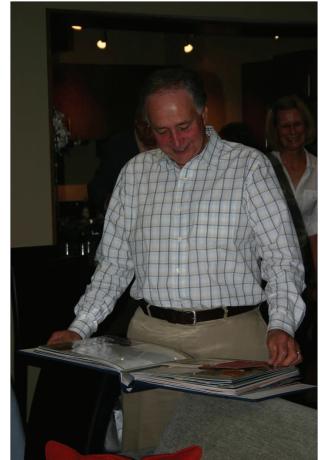
"As I reflect back on the time we've worked together, I realize that I am not only appreciative of your many accomplishments but also for who you are. I have learned so much from you about the effects of dedication and loyalty."

"I am grateful that you took me on as a new graduate and an individual. Moving out to Portland has been one of the happiest and most fulfilling experiences of my life."

"I was surprised you chose to take a chance on me and hired me for the job. I can't thank you enough for the extraordinary support and mentoring you have provided me with during the past 12 years."

"Headphone placement was key with you. One day you walked into the lab and told me I had the headphones on crooked. I said 'no' but you had to go into the booth to check. When you came out you said the headphones were on right - but that the Veteran's ears were really crooked."

"When I first met you I thought you were a little scary - and maybe a little crazy. I don't think you are scary anymore."



Retirement Celebration, November 2010 (continued from Page 4)

his profession and to the innumerable people who have benefitted from his great clinical skills, research and scholarship.

As an administrator he is well-balanced, fair, decisive, and assumes his responsibilities to the fullest.

As an educator he is very erudite, a mentor, and an inspirational motivator. As a man he is truly a Renaissance man. He is Aristotelian in his curiosity and thirst for knowledge.

As a father, he is devoted, loving and caring. As a husband, a special partner with a great wife. As a friend, he is generous, warm and thoughtful. He is there when you need him and is truly first class.

Steve you may be retiring, but I know you will continue with greater fervor and energy to continue to touch many more lives.

You personify what has been said: 100 years from now it will not matter how large your bank account was, or the kind of car you drove, but how you made a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities.

And that is you Steve. So my good friend, as you sail off to explore new shores, continue to be the brilliant beacon of light that you are.

So ladies and gentlemen, let's toast Steve - Good health, good life, and may all your dreams come true.

Congratulations.

Hon. Margaret Giannini, MD FAAP

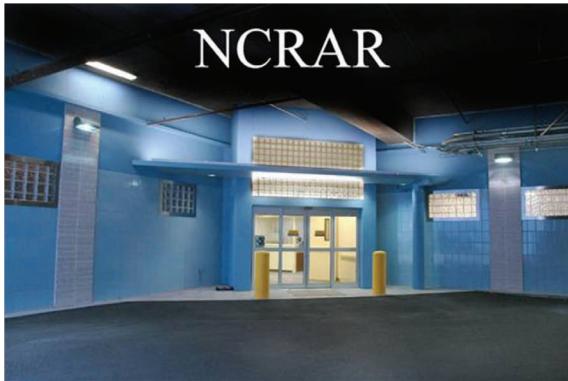
Stephen Fausti through the ages: Building the NCRAR



Dr. Smith, Pat Helt, Dr. Fausti, and Dr. Phillips in 1999 reviewing and discussing architectural plans for the new NCRAR building.



Drs. Fausti, Tuchschmidt, and Smith at the NCRAR groundbreaking ceremony in 2001.



Entrance to the NCRAR.



A recent NCRAR meeting led by Dr. Fausti.



NCRAR staff photo 2009